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Gender and Migration

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Date of publication: February 23rd, 2017

Edition period: Edition period: February 2017-June 2017

To cite this article: Rodríguez Loredo, A. (2016). *Gender and Migration* [Review of the book]. *Social and Education History* 5(1), 112-114
doi:10.17583/hse.2017.2448

To link this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/hse.2017.2448>

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Reviews (II)

Caroline B. Brettel (2016). *Gender and migration*. Cambridge: Politiy Press.

In this book, Caroline Brettel adopts a gender perspective to study international migrations from many countries to the United States, from 1965 to our days. In the introduction, she presents the approach that combines Migrations with Gender Studies, describing each of the stages that consolidate it as we know it nowadays: interdisciplinary and fundamental to explain the migration phenomenon in all its complexity.

The book is organized in four chapters. In the first one, "The Gendered Demography of US Immigration History", distinguishes by gender the migrations that arrived in the USA between 1812 and 2012, and analyzes each case considering the countries of origin and the reasons to migrate. The author presents a comparison between these figures and those of other countries of destination and confronts her study with other scholars' research. Thus, it shows that by considering the cultural characteristics of the country of origin we'll have a better comprehension of the migration phenomenon. At the same time, this can help us understand why the migrations of a given country are mostly male, female or egalitarian.

In the second chapter, "The Gendering of Law, Policy, Citizenship, and Political Practice," reconstructs the legal framework of migrations to the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and points out differences in the application of laws between men and women. It shows that migration policies reflect the way migrants are socially constructed by the

2017 Hipatia Press

ISSN: 2014-3567

DOI: 10.17583/hse.2016.2448

Hipatia Press

www.hipatiapress.com

state and offer a gender, class and race bias that leads to inequalities. Brettel offers a complete review on several studies that support these claims: families with mixed legal status, the case of anchor babies, the discrimination against Arab migrant men from 9/11 and the cultural bias of asylum and refugee migration policies. These cases postulate many challenges and require to be approached from a human rights perspective. At the same time, they show us the impact that the legislation and the policies from both sending and receiving countries have on the migratory process.

The third chapter, "Gendered Labor Markets", starts off from the idea that the labor demand shapes the migratory flows. For this reason, the study of migration must analyze labor markets and do so from a gender perspective, since there is a segmentation of labor offers for men and women. The author presents different examples to show how migrant workers must develop strategies that allow them to reinvent themselves in the new workplace, reorganizing their time to accomplish with both domestic and professional tasks. This leads to many changes and cultural conflicts that the author presents and analyzes carefully.

Finally, the fourth chapter, "Gender and the Immigrant Family," argues that family and gender relations are impacted by geographical mobility and by living and working in a society culturally different to one's own. In this context, gender roles within the family are renegotiated. The author presents particular cases as examples, such as overexploited Korean women, differences in parenting styles between Italian natives and migrants, the so called parachute kids or honor killings as a result of an irreconcilable cultural shock.

All these cases show us that the gender relations for migrant families are fluid and are in constant process of transformation, both in the countries of origin and in the host countries. At the end of the chapter the author presents another interesting approach: the one that analyzes the flows of remittances from a gender perspective.

On the conclusion, the author encourages to approach the research in relation to gender and migration from a more interdisciplinary and comparative perspective, to offer a complete theoretical view and to establish relations between the existing studies. She also suggests some lines of research, among which we highlight "the intersections and gender

differences between the second generation of immigrants," since it undoubtedly has a direct impact on education.

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